

and an increase of 29.2% (\$16.3 million to \$21.1 million) for the county exclusive of the Hickory, Longview and Newton localities. As late as September, 1968, Catawba County produced retail sales of more than \$22.5 million, but approximately 70% of this was generated in Hickory.* Thus, while overall data for the county appears favorable, it is probable that Maiden is failing to draw its full share of the retail trade of the area.

There can be many reasons for a lack of effectiveness in retail sales, not the least of which is the trend toward patronage of the large, regional shopping centers around large cities -- at the expense of the small town merchants. There are two important means for expanding local trade, however, these being (1) to make the local trade facilities and selections more attractive and convenient to the local people, and (2) to raise the level of income available to the citizens -- thus providing more money for local circulation.

Although not a quick and easy job for the small town with its many property owners and limited financial means, the first point of attracting more shoppers is not impossible. The idea of aesthetics with convenience is weighted heavily in the construction of shopping centers and downtown renewal projects nationwide. Design and sales volume have been tied together in recent years, both in new centers and in older areas that have been renewed. Improved appearances plus the convenience (that may be an even more important selling point of the small merchant) of the "hometown stores" could well be an important turning point to the Maiden area. It is obvious that several downtown buildings are direly in need of repair or replacement,

*Source: "Retailers Here Set High All-Time Sales Records," the Hickory Daily Record, Oct. 22, 1968.